

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
City Hall, 11th Floor
Park Conference Room
455 N. Main
September 16, 2013
3:00 p.m.**

Present: Bryan Frye, Ron Allen, Cindy Claycomb, Steve Hieger

Absent: Hoyt Hillman, Tom Roth

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation, Elizabeth Harlenske, City Assistant Attorney, Christina Butler, Clerk, Barbara McGuire, Program Specialist, Scott Knebel, Planning, John Van Walleghen, Kathy Dittmer, Bob Lutz, Amy Liebau, George Laham, Dave Wells, M.S. Mitchell, Sharon Fearey, Delora Donovan, Jeff Fluhr, Tom Kneil citizens.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00pm.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Frye asked if there was anyone present to speak on the public agenda.

John Van Walleghen (2524 Hyacinth Lane, Wichita, KS) stated he would like to speak regarding the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit that was scheduled to be studied and possibly re-purposed. He would like to support it as it currently is for nature education for schools and other events in the area. It is supported by the City, Great Plains Nature Center (GPNC) and Friends of GPNC. There are a lot of parties involved in keeping it operational. He would like to be on next month's agenda to start a public forum and to request public dialogue about the current exhibit and its future.

Frye asked if there were any particular questions.

Van Walleghen responded that the possibility of re-purposing the exhibit has all supporters concerned.

Frye stated this was part of the budget.

Kupper added that the Park Department staff had been tasked with beginning dialogue with the neighborhoods and associations similar to the forum used for the Golf community engagement meetings and the Bicycle and Walking Path Master Plan meetings by the Planning Department. He would like to start scheduling meetings by October 1, 2013.

Frye stated that nothing had been decided about the status or the funding of the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit.

Claycomb asked if the Park Board made the decision about the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit.

Frye stated that the Park Board would listen to the plan and make a recommendation to City Council.

Kupper stated City Council would make the final decision.

Van Walleghen stated he would like to be on the email list to be notified of the community engagement meeting dates/times.

Kathy Dittmer (823 Litchfield, Wichita, KS) spoke about the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit. She, along with Van Walleghen and others perceive the exhibit as a satellite of the GPNC. She lives three blocks away from the exhibit and would like to be involved in the future planning of it. She also wanted to make sure the Friends of GPNC and GPNC are included in the decision-making process.

Frye asked if there were any other questions or comments and there were none.

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 1A: Approval of Minutes

Motion by Claycomb, second by Frye, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve, sign and file minutes of the August 19, 2013, Board of Park Commissioners Regular Meeting (4-0).

Item 2A: League 42 (Bob Lutz)

Kupper introduced Bob Lutz, sports columnist for the Wichita Eagle.

Lutz stated he had the first meeting two months ago with the goal of introducing the game of baseball to inner-city kids who would not have the opportunity to play otherwise. He stated the number 42 symbolized the jersey number of Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play baseball in the major leagues. They will be working in conjunction with the Cal Ripken Sr Foundation from Baltimore, MD. They will have fundraising efforts with 40 volunteers dedicated to the project. Ron Allen's brother was one of the first to speak in favor of the project. Their first focus is McAdams Park and they want to improve the fields there. They recognize that funds are difficult to come by. They are impressed with the park and have gotten to know it well and feel there is a lot that can be done there.

Kupper stated the two fields in question are used for softball games as needed. The single baseball field is located on 13th Street. One field is on Park Board land and the other is deeded to the City of Wichita. He stated he was excited to meet with the Cal Ripken Sr Foundation and they are all excited about the project. He stated the Foundation plans to build 50 inner-city fields in the nation and he would like Wichita to have two of those fields. The Foundation is also big on teaching life lessons as well as the game. He stated that League 42 will be a separate league from the City's baseball league, but there will be an opportunity for them to compete.

Frye asked what was being asked of the Park Board.

Kupper responded nothing was being asked of the Board yet. They were waiting to get agreements from organizations.

Lutz stated they would like to have the fields ready by Spring 2015. They will have a camp on Sunday and were hoping to have teams from t-ball age thru ages 11-12.

Allen asked if there were any equipment needs.

Lutz responded they are collecting equipment at McAdams Recreation Center and will collect it throughout the duration of the program. He stated they will charge a nominal fee to get the family vested in the program, but it will be affordable to all.

Claycomb asked if fields will still be available for softball.

Kupper responded yes and that they will be used at different times of the year.

Frye asked if there were public questions or comments and there were none. He thanked Lutz for the opportunity for the kids and to better use McAdams Park.

Item 2B: Westbank Development Presentation (Scott Knebel)

Knebel stated that the site in question is located between Douglas and 1st Street on McLean on the West Bank stage site just north of Delano Park, the McLean fountain and the steer sculpture. The City had identified this as a catalyst site and had sought developer interest. They were seeking endorsement of the project from the Park Board as they go back to City Council on 10/8/13 for approval of the plan and design.

George Laham (150 N. Market, Wichita, KS) introduced his staff Amy Liebau and Dave Wells along with Key Construction that were working on the River Vista residences located on the West Bank stage site and Delano Park to the south. They were proposing a four story 154 unit building with surface and elevated parking available. There would also be 132 parking spaces designated for public parking. The proposed library will be on the corner of 1st and McLean Streets. They want the River Vista residences to have a real neighborhood feel with the library, Drury Hotel, Exploration Place and the Keeper of the Plains taken into consideration when looking at this project. They tried to create a timeless area that took into consideration the surrounding architecture. All units face the river or to the north. They will have a clubhouse off of the pool deck with access to the river from there as well. They will also have a banquet facility, and area for renting and storing boats and bikes to activate use of the river. They are working with the Wichita Rowing Association (WRA) and the Wichita State University rowing team and may be able to accommodate their shells in this facility. The landscape should be consistent with the Drury Hotel's landscape and the walking paths so there will be continuity within all areas along the river. This will be a STAR bond project. They are shooting for 10/8/13 as the day to finalize it with City Council.

Hieger asked about the price range of the units.

Liebau responded they would be approximately \$0.90 - \$1.06 per square foot.

Laham added that this was comparable, if not slightly below, to what is currently charged downtown.

Claycomb asked about the building on McLean in the rendering.

Laham responded it was the Riverplaza Building which would be a commercial, 20,000 square foot, two story building for retail, restaurants, or offices.

Claycomb asked if the developer would pay for the riverfront site plan since it was not in the original RFP.

Kupper responded that the STAR Bond Project would help to pay for a portion of it and the City will help to pay for some it.

Knebel noted that this is the preliminary design.

Kupper stated they have targeted in the CIP the west bank of the river across from the Drury Hotel improvements.

Laham estimated the cost at \$2.5 million.

Hieger applauded the incorporation of boating into the project.

Laham added he thought it will be great for the residents and the community as well because they want to create more activity on the river.

Harlenske asked if the property will stay public.

Kupper responded yes and that it would be no different than what they have at Veteran's Park, the Hyatt lawn, and the Drury Hotel.

Knebel stated his department will plat the property line between public and private and added that most of it is right-of-way (ROW) where McLean used to be.

Frye asked if it will be a gated community.

Laham responded no, but there will be an elevated parking garage which will be only for the residents.

Frye asked if they will be responsible for their own maintenance.

Kupper responded yes.

Frye asked if improvements to the trees on McLean will come under STAR bonds.

Kupper responded yes.

Frye asked who would manage Boats and Bikes.

Laham responded that they were in preliminary discussions with the WRA and WSU and they may have agreements with them.

Frye asked about the square footage of the basement storage.

Liebau responded that Boats and Bikes would be approximately 4,000 square feet and an additional storage space of 4,000 square feet.

Laham stated they would provide long term storage for WSU and short term storage for the WRA. He stated that the WRA wants to be on the Little Arkansas River.

Frye stated he appreciated them bringing this to the Board to weigh in on and comment.

Sharon Fearey (1323 N. Emporia) stated she had worked on a master plan several years ago with plans to rebuild the West Bank Stage. She asked if that plan was gone now or if it was north of there.

Knebel noted that plan had been developed in 1999 with plans for an amphitheater, but the project was never funded by the City despite a number of attempts to include it in the CIP. When the Downtown Master Plan came up, it was approved by the City Council to proceed with this.

Jeff Fluhr (507 E. Douglas Avenue, Wichita, KS) stated he was with the Downtown Development Corporation and they feel the residential space will activate the river and the commercial space will also help this project come to fruition. It could also activate the parks.

Laham noted they were sponsoring Autumn and Art at Bradley Fair for the fourth year with 91 artists. This event would bring approximately 14,000 people thru Bradley Fair and would be free to the public. He hoped to bring the same type of activities to the river as they have done at Bradley Fair.

Frye asked what the boundaries would be of the STAR Bond as it relates to the project.

Knebel responded that the State determines that and they would be approaching the State in the next two weeks. It was their intent to ask for approval essentially from Douglas to Lawrence Dumont Stadium. They intend to ask for permission to finish the stretch from north of the Drury Hotel.

Claycomb asked when the project would start and end.

Laham responded they would go to City Council on 10/8/13 with a target construction start date of 5/1/14. It would take approximately 18-24 months total to completion date, however the logistics would have to fall into place and the STAR Bond Project would have to be completed before they could start.

Frye asked if there were any questions and there were none. He noted that no action was required. He thought it was exciting to have this project to have more riverfront activity.

Laham asked if they needed an action before going to City Council.

Motion by Frye, second by Allen, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to enthusiastically support the West Bank Development Plan (4-0).

Item 2C: City Codes About Use of Both Rivers in Times of Floods

Kupper stated he had asked Harlenske to discuss it because of the flood situation that occurred in August. It brought to light the question of who has the authority to decide who can be on the river. It appears by looking at the codes that the Park Board has the authority, but this was when they had an enforcement team. He stated they need to look at this per the law and need more dialogue to take place. He suggested having more discussions on it for the Park Board retreat in October. Another part of the ordinance states that anyone making a profit must have a permit. They have been asked by the Arkansas River Coalition to give them a letter showing authorization to give rides along the river.

Harlenske stated she would email the ordinances and codes to the Board so they could review them prior to the retreat in October.

Kupper stated that the City Manager has set it up that the Park Department has the deciding authority. He noted they have to rely on the Stormwater Director to advise on the river flow patterns, the Fire Department also weighs in due to the rescue efforts they may have to do and the Police Department has to enforce the decision so they must be consulted as well. There is also an issue about charging fees and the Arkansas River Coalition is the first group to come forward.

Frye asked if that would be the same for River Vista.

Kupper responded yes. They do give permits for motorized boats, but it is usually not necessary to permit the non-motorized crafts.

Tom Kneil (6110 Edinburgh, Bel Air, KS) introduced himself as a Arkansas River Coalition representative. He corrected the url for the group as arkrivercoalition.org. He stated that the previous Saturday morning they had dedicated the floating dock by Gander Mountain. He stated their organization is a 501c3 non-profit that has been in existence since 1998. There are two codes the Board is to consider at the October retreat that the coalition is concerned about. They are requesting a letter from the Board to cover them as they operate on the river. He stated their organization does not charge and there is no cost to people who float with them. Patrons can make a donation since the River Coalition provides the kayak, life jackets, and paddles because they want to promote the river. The river is an amenity and they try to get people on the river. Their most visible public effort is during the Riverfest where they offer canoeing or kayaking for no fee. They put over 600 people on the river during the previous Riverfest. This past year they were unable to do so due to the wind. They could tie into the future River Vista project. They are requesting a letter from the Board to satisfy the codes in question because they have twilight floats on the Little Arkansas River and all day on the Big Arkansas River.

Frye asked if this is the current code.

Harlenske responded yes.

Frye noted that it states that they will need the City's and the Park Board's permission.

Kupper stated they usually write a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and take it to City Council. If they think it will be less than \$25,000, the City Manager could choose to sign it. If it is above \$25,000, it would have to go to City Council. He stated they could start an MOU if directed so by the Board and the City Manager could decide to sign it.

Kneil added that the boat bypass was built for kayaks and canoes, but this puts them within 50' of the dam which puts them in violation of the code.

Harlenske stated this needs to be repealed right away since there is a boat bypass that gets boats within 50' of the dam which is against the current code.

Frye stated the Board needs to review the codes and look at them in depth in October.

Kupper stated that the bypass is currently closed due to the catastrophic failure of the wall during the flood. He noted that they could get a moratorium on that particular code.

Harlenske stated that re-doing the ordinances is not a simple task. It will be essential to include Police,

Fire, and Public Works. There is a state statute allowing municipalities authority over what occurs in the river in their jurisdiction as long as it does not conflict with State or Federal regulations. They have to give public notice and send them to the Secretary of Tourism, Wildlife and Parks for approval. Until they are approved, they are not effective.

Frye noted since there is more interest in the use of the river, there is more reason to revise the ordinances.

Claycomb stated she would hate to hold up the request for a year and that maybe they could do a temporary MOU for a year and then it will be revisited.

Harlenske stated they could ask City Council for a moratorium for the bypass.

Kupper stated the bypass may be closed for a year so it could be a mute point.

Harlenske added they have three levels of bureaucracy to change the ordinances. She stated they will also have to educate the police. There is a provision that states there cannot be alcohol in the river or within a certain distance from the river.

Kupper stated 10/5/13 would be the earliest they could start the MOU for the River Coalition.

Frye added that they want the River Coalition to continue promoting the river.

Item 3A: Southlakes Negotiations

Kupper stated they have struck a deal with Mike Brand per the Board's direction. Walking paths, fencing, picnic tables, benches, and a floating fishing dock have been agreed to swap out with Mike Brand. Property Management was present for all negotiations and it will be on the 10/1/13 Consent Agenda for City Council. Based on estimated costs, the Board is getting no less than the appraised value of the land which is approximately \$159,000. The one concession made was instead of an 8' chain link fence, it will be a 5' wrought iron fence from 55th Street to the property line.

Claycomb asked if the dock will be ADA accessible.

Kupper responded no, but it will have a handrail and get the fishermen out into the deeper water. He noted that the topography is such that it would cost \$50-60,000 to accomplish.

Allen asked what the dimensions are for the platform.

Kupper responded he would get those for him.

Frye noted the Board is giving up the land, but doing so in exchange for the amenities. He asked if anyone had heard from any constituents.

Hieger responded no.

Frye noted that the Board is not in the habit of giving up park territory, but in his opinion this was a fair trade. They will get amenities for the park that they did not have the funds to provide and this is a win/win for everyone. He thanked Kupper and staff for working on this project.

Motion by Frye, second by Hieger, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve staff negotiations and recommend City Council to approve the request (4-0).

Frye noted that it will now go to council. He stated it had already been approved for a zoning change and was approved by the MAPC. He added that when the board discusses a subject, Board members should not go to another board and say what they have endorsed. The Board can appoint a specific person to be the spokesperson.

Item 4A: Golf Update

Kupper stated that August was a tough month for golf. This August was wet, but mild. Due to rain, they were closed on Sundays which are the biggest golf days. They have controlled expenses and are in good shape, so they will not need to ask for an increase in fees. They are also paying close attention to the debt service payments.

Hieger stated he did not receive the golf rounds update.

Kupper responded he would ask Hendricks to email the numbers to the Board.

Frye asked when the next Golf Committee meeting was scheduled.

Kupper responded he would get back to them with the date. He noted he had completed the ranking sheet on the 40 applicants for the Golf Division Manager position.

Claycomb asked how many applicants he would bring in for interviews.

Kupper responded it would be less than 10.

Frye asked if he knew why there were so many applicants.

Kupper noted that the question becomes “is it a business or just golf?” The position will be a manager position, not necessarily teaching lessons, or maintaining greens.

Frye noted they had heard from private management companies that it should be run as a business.

Kupper stated he anticipated that members of the Board and the Golf Committee will be involved in the selection process.

Frye noted the Golf Committee asked if they could meet the final candidates.

Kupper added that they hired a new Assistant Golf Pro from Arizona to work at Sim. His name is Aaron Calderon.

Item 4B: Recreation Update (Barbara McGuire)

Kupper introduced Barbara McGuire as the Program Specialist for the Recreation Division.

McGuire discussed programming trends and noted that the one-day workshops were doing well. Many programs are targeting baby boomers who have more time and more expendable funds. There is also a focus on inter-generational programs – grandparents/mom/dad & me. The standard classes still doing

well are: ballet and tap, taekwondo, yoga, tiny tumblers (basic tumbling, not gymnastics), and country line dance. Some of the new classes that are doing well are: archery through a partnership with Wichita Shooting Stars; martial arts for tots; Forever Fit for active adults; Ghost Academy through a partnership with the Wichita Paranormal Research Society; Boy Scout Badges; DIY workshops through a partnership with the Home Depot; creeking programs through the WATER center; nature programs at the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit; and a Hunter Education Course for youth through a partnership with Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. New fall programs leading the pack are: Zombie Fest Camp; Polar Express program at Watson park; contact boxing at Lynette Woodard; wrestling; night photography – outdoors; and Zumba gold (plus size).

Hieger asked if they had considered partnering with the Sailing Association.

McGuire responded they had not yet. They had tried to focus on using the facilities, but water activities will be good for the future. She noted they are constantly searching for new programming. They do customer surveys asking them what they want to see in the future. She noted that Fall classes start this week.

Frye asked if people can buy gift certificates for classes.

McGuire responded that was not currently available, but they are working on it. She asked the Board to send suggestions to her at bmcguire@wichita.gov.

Item 5A: Issues on the Horizon

Kupper stated there would be public engagement on the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit. No decision has been made on this. They have to see what is sustainable and what makes sense. He noted this is the second time they have looked at the exhibit. The Friends of the Great Plains Nature Center pays for the feeding and veterinary care of the animals at the exhibit. The naturalists use the animals for programming. They get a permit from the Federal government each year. He noted they have had animals on exhibit since the early 1900s in Riverside Park. The question has been asked if there is a need to create an exhibit at Great Plains Nature Center (GPNC) instead of Riverside Park. This could draw more people to GPNC and Chisholm Creek Park, but nothing has been decided.

Kupper noted that Watson Park has also come into question. They have been asked if it makes sense to continue to operate the asset or if it would be better to run it with a concessionaire running the concessions, paddle boats, rides, ponies, and mini golf.

Kupper noted that the Aquatics Master Plan will have to go out to the community as well. He stated they will have a busy winter setting up meetings and going to neighborhood association meetings.

Allen asked if Kupper knew what will happen with the McAdams pool.

Kupper responded that they do not want to pre-conceive what will happen if the pool is closed. There has been talk that some want a skate park or an interactive water fountain. If League 42 does well, it will affect the pool. He noted they have assets at McAdams Park, but they will not know what will happen until there is discussion with the community.

Claycomb asked if all those closings previously discussed are a done deal.

Kupper responded yes, but what is going in their place has not yet been decided. They will keep Minisa open until Evergreen can be re-opened.

Frye asked that the community engagement opportunities be put on the Board's calendar as this was invaluable for the Golf and Recreation processes.

Kupper stated that members of the Board may be asked to be the representative for the various engagement opportunities.

Kupper stated that the City Council will be sitting down for a strategic plan and may be requesting a meeting with the Board members to see what the City Council should be focused on for the next three to five years.

Frye asked how this fits in with all the other studies they have had done.

Kupper responded it will be in addition to them with a focus on the CIP and PROS Plan.

Frye stated the Board still needed an appointee from the Mayor and if anyone knew of someone who was interested in the position to pass on the name to the Mayor, Kupper or Frye. They need a full board in order to have elections.

Frye asked the Board to review the 2013 goals and asked Butler to send them to the Board.

Frye added that the Party in the Park would take place on 10/5/13 for the Park Foundation, the 501c3. It will be on the Hyatt lawn at 5:30pm. Invitations are supposed to go out this week.

Kupper stated the new floating stage is supposed to be delivered this week and will be put in near Gander Mountain and the Boat House.

Claycomb stated the Gander Mountain boat dock dedication went well. She noted that the Steer dedication would be on 9/28/13.

Kupper stated they are looking for donors for landscaping and lighting for the Steer. Greenway Alliance may pay for the lighting. Landscaping could cost approximately \$2-3,000.

Item 6A: Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:27pm.

Bryan Frye, President

Christina Butler, Clerk